

Name: Bryan Berghoef

Phone: 616-422-8514

Office Sought: US House of Representatives MI-02 Party: Democrat

Website: bryanberghoef.com

Email: bryan@bryanberghoef.com

1. Have you ever been appointed or elected to public office?

No, I have never served in a political office at any level, but have spent my career in service to my congregation and community.

2. Have you ever owned a business or has someone in your family owned a business? If yes, please describe.

As a pastor, I have not owned a business, but I have started three different congregations from scratch, which require many of the entrepreneurial skills needed to start and run a small business.

3. Briefly describe the qualifications and experience you possess that make you the best candidate for this office.

I have been an ordained pastor and church planter for 15 years. Being a pastor requires a number of skills, including: being a good listener, empathy, collaboration, and entrepreneurship. I've had the privilege of sitting in the kitchens, backyards, and front porches of my congregants to hear their stories, sympathize with them in loss, walk with them through challenges, and dream together of a better future. I think it is critically important that we have a representative in US Congress who can listen to his or her constituents, hear their concerns, and work with them for a better future.

Being a pastor means being a leader in the community. It means making relationships and collaborating with business owners, civic leaders, neighbors, fellow clergy, and folks working in non-profits. I've had opportunities to do this on issues around recycling, affordable housing, and hunger.

Starting a church from scratch also requires collaboration, casting vision, and empowering people to serve and love their neighbors. We need a representative who can lead with vision and move us forward together.

I also believe we need a representative who understands and can work with people from all walks of life. Nearly a dozen years ago, I started Pub Theology, a discussion group for people of various (or no) religious and political persuasions to have open and respectful dialogue. Over these years, I have found that sitting at the same table allowed us to discover the common humanity in each other, and—despite some real differences—discover our shared values. I

wrote a book about my experiences and have helped form and coordinate Pub Theology groups across the country.

I believe that we need a representative who values justice and opportunity for all our neighbors. For years I have been involved in work around racial equity, caring for the environment, and supporting the marginalized.

And finally, I am the only candidate in this race who is a graduate of a West Michigan public school (Sparta High School), a public university (the University of Michigan), and who is endorsed by the Michigan Education Association and the National Education Association.

I grew up in West Michigan, I love West Michigan, and I am ready to work for all the citizens of West Michigan.

4. What do you believe should be the role of government in today's world?

The United States' government is designed to fulfill the lofty mission of the preamble - "form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity." Government is seen as a universal solution by some, and the archenemy by others; it is neither. It has a place in society and should be focused on creating a country where everyone has the opportunity and tools to flourish.

5. What do you consider to be the top three (3) issues facing Muskegon County businesses today and how can the State government address them?

The biggest issues facing local business are 1. a lack of skilled labor, 2. recovery from Covid-19, and 2. Childcare for working families. We need to make sure America has a 21st century skills labor force, and I will work to increase funding for programs to teach trades and other skilled manufacturing jobs. We need to continue to keep struggling small and medium size businesses afloat through this time and provide adequate resources for workers. It is why I am so disappointed that Congressman Huizenga voted against the HEROES Act. Lastly, we need to fight for universal Pre-K. Universal Pre-K will not only help reduce the burden of childcare, but is also one of the government programs with the highest rate of return.

6. Name one thing that you think is going right in Muskegon County and one thing that you think could be changed right away.

Muskegon county has done a great job to become more and more a year around tourist destination, and in Washington I would continue to fight for resources and money to help continue to make Musekgon a destination.

Local government has been unstable and controversial since 2018. We need to work together, heal the hurt and division, and make sure that there is a shared collective vision for our future that the community can unite around.

7. In what areas can you make the most difference as a Federal elected official?

My background as a pastor creates a unique opportunity and perspective that I believe will make a difference. I will be committed to listening and empathizing with needs and issues of my constituents of all types. My years of experience working on bringing together people of diverse thoughts and experiences through my founding of Pub Theology will help me build meaningful relationships across the aisle.

8. How will you leverage and utilize the Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce as a resource should you be elected?

I think it is important to stay up to date about what is happening in the community and a good place to get some of that information is from local chambers of commerce. Additionally, I am far from an expert on every industry, and I would leverage members to help me be a better advocate for local businesses and industries.

9. If elected, what are your top 3 priorities?

Campaign Finance and Ethics: As congressman, I will represent the needs of West Michganders, not wealthy special interests. That's why I support comprehensive campaign finance reform, including a constitutional amendment to overturn *Citizen's United* and stop unlimited dark corporate money from flooding our elections.

Bill Huizenga is currently under ethics investigation for spending hundreds of thousands of dollars of his campaign funds on vacations, meals, and gas for his friends and family. West Michigan deserves a representative who's prioritizing public well-being, not their personal lavish lifestyle.

The Coronavirus Pandemic: For months now, we've known that wearing face masks and practicing social distancing reduces disease spread and would allow for faster and safer reopening of schools and businesses. But President Trump and Bill Huizenga have shown they are more interested in playing politics than saving lives and reopening Michigan responsibly. And while voting *against* increased relief for Michigan families, Bill Huizenga's personal

business got federal aid. As congressman, I would support science-based policies that will contain this disease, and economic stimulus to help families through the crisis.

Economic Opportunity: My campaign is about creating a society where everyone has the opportunity to thrive - where individuals can work hard in well-paying jobs, where our West Michigan businesses prosper, and where families have easy access to affordable health care, housing, and education that is fundamental to human flourishing. I support a minimum wage that families can actually live on, strong unions that are proven to be connected to greater equality, and non-college pathways to meaningful employment.

10. Is there anything else you would like to add?